

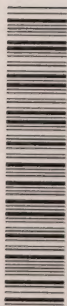
The National Advisory Council on Aging

CAI
HW 720

2003

Working for Canada's Seniors

Today and Tomorrow



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NACA and YOU



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada



Who are You?

Are **you** 65 years old or more? If so, you are one of over 3 million people in Canada's senior population. Not only is the senior population growing in numbers, it is also increasing as a proportion of the total population. Today, seniors comprise 12% of the population. By 2021, they will probably represent about 20% (barring dramatic changes in fertility, migration and mortality).

Perhaps **you** are a near senior—aged 55-64. If so, you are one of nearly 2.5 million Canadians. Maybe **you** are a younger Canadian concerned about the aging of a parent or a relative. Perhaps **you** are a service provider whose clientele is older people. Or **you** may be a business person wanting to adjust to the seniors boom. **You** may also be a politician, an elected official or an organization's representative concerned about aging policies. Or perhaps **you** are one of the many people who are interested in seniors and aging from a research, communications or program development perspective. The possibilities abound. If you count yourself among any of these groups or individuals then you are the **YOU** of NACA and You.



*W*hat is the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA)?

The National Advisory Council on Aging was created May 1, 1980 to assist and advise the Minister of Health on all matters related to the aging of the Canadian population and the quality of life of seniors. These may be matters that the Minister refers to the Council or that the Council considers appropriate.



*W*ho is NACA?

The Council consists of up to 18 members from all parts of Canada and all walks of life. The members bring to Council a variety of concerns, experiences and abilities. Members are appointed by Order-in-Council for two- or three-year terms, renewable once.

Support for the Council's operations is provided by a team of Federal Public Service employees located in Ottawa.





hat does NACA believe?

NACA believes that:

- ✳ Canada must guarantee the same rights and privileges to all its citizens, regardless of their age
- ✳ Seniors have the right to be autonomous while benefitting from interdependence and to make their own decisions, even if it means 'living at risk'
- ✳ Seniors must be involved in the development of policies and programs
- ✳ Seniors must be assured of adequate income protection, universal access to health care, and the availability of a range of programs and services in all regions of Canada that support their autonomy. These policies and programs must take into account their individuality and cultural diversity.



How does NACA “assist and advise?”

NACA's primary function is to offer advice to the Minister of Health. The Council interprets this as providing well thought out, timely and sensible recommendations to current and upcoming issues and priorities, as well as conducting various activities that reinforce the Council's advisory capacity.

In fact, NACA is commissioned to:

- ✳ review the needs and problems of seniors and recommend remedial action
- ✳ maintain contact with national, provincial and local associations, institutions and groups involved in aging or representing seniors
- ✳ distribute information
- ✳ publish reports
- ✳ stimulate public discussion on aging.

The Minister of Health is not NACA's only client. Often, NACA addresses issues or conducts activities that fall within the purview of other stakeholders.



How does NACA “review the needs of seniors and recommend remedial action?”

First, NACA **consults extensively** before it selects the strategic issues and concerns to be addressed.

For example, NACA:

- ✳ relies on members' **informal networks** in their region to provide pertinent local evaluations of issues
- ✳ calls on the **readers of its many publications** for input and feedback
- ✳ holds **focus group sessions, expert meetings and think-tanks** to brainstorm on issues
- ✳ consults with **seniors, seniors' organizations, caregivers, government officials, various specialists and researchers** by phone, through letter exchange, discussion in different venues and participation in conferences and on study committees.

Second, NACA **monitors policy developments** in Canada and abroad and **conducts documentary research and quantitative or qualitative analysis** on selected issues. The Council's data collection methods include special consultations, data and literature searches, media reviews and content analyses. Following the analysis of research findings, various avenues of response to seniors' and aging concerns are defined.

Third, NACA **selects the best policy and program alternatives** and develops its position on the issues under study. NACA's recommendations reflect the **consensus of all Council members**.

Why does NACA “maintain contact with national, provincial and local associations?”

In two years alone, NACA worked on some 60 topics, including income security, seniors' health, housing, women's life-course events, the very old senior, the aging labour force, continuing education, gerontology training, geriatric assessment and elder abuse. So many issues could not be covered effectively without the close collaboration of informed contacts.

The Council, therefore, counts on these contacts to bring in ideas, solutions and critiques.

The Council also depends on these contacts to disseminate NACA's views and positions to various agents of change and to wider audiences. By multiplying the pressure points acting on any given issue, the chances of progress are all the more likely. By reprinting, reformulating and quoting NACA's material, associations allow a greater readership to participate in the discussion of issues.

Finally, by establishing partnerships the Council and its contacts achieve greater impact, more visibility and better cost-effectiveness. In addition, co-ventures in publishing, in promotional campaigns or in issue resolution can be mutually beneficial from the standpoint of technical expertise alone.



How does NACA “distribute information...?”

All possible means are used.

NACA:

- ✳ maintains a mailing list of interested individuals and organizations who receive NACA's bulletins, position papers and notices of publication. The Council also directs its publications to individuals with a specific stake or role in the issues discussed and obtains their feedback
- ✳ appears before parliamentary committees so that its views on issues are a matter of public record
- ✳ answers over 8,000 individual requests by phone, fax or letter each year
- ✳ exhibits its material at conferences and sponsors public awareness campaigns
- ✳ makes its publications available to over 1,300 public and educational libraries that receive notices of new Government of Canada publications
- ✳ members participate in regional events and ensure that local libraries have NACA's reports
- ✳ members and staff are available to speak to seniors' organizations on a variety of themes.



How does NACA “publish reports...?”

NACA publishes a variety of documents to reach a variety of audiences and to answer specific needs.

The Council's publications include:

- ✳ **The NACA Position Papers** — policy papers giving NACA's opinions and recommendations on the needs and concerns of seniors and issues related to the aging of the population
- ✳ **Expression** — a thematic quarterly newsletter on various aspects of the life of aging Canadians
- ✳ **Info-Âge** — a bulletin of facts on aging, co-produced with the Family and Community Support Systems Division of Statistics Canada
- ✳ **The Writings in Gerontology** — indepth examinations of topical issues in the field of aging
- ✳ **The Forum Collection Papers** — reports designed to create public awareness and promote discussion on emerging issues
- ✳ **The Challenge Papers** — reports designed to promote action on issues that need to be resolved collectively.



How does NACA “stimulate public discussion on aging?”

The Council encourages the resolution of issues in aging through public debate.

To that end, NACA:

- ✳ organizes panel discussions, workshops and conferences with seniors, seniors' organizations and experts in various fields
- ✳ actively solicits the input and comments from a variety of players to generate interest on topics discussed by the Council
- ✳ co-operates with the media to create a greater national awareness of aging and seniors
- ✳ promotes special events, major reports and new initiatives and appointments through press releases and conferences. The Council's chairperson and members are also available for media interviews
- ✳ submits articles to newspapers and professional journals, as well as provides technical advice to radio and television producers.



What can You do for NACA and Canada's seniors?

As a senior or an interested citizen, you can

- ✳ request NACA's publications and keep informed of developments in aging
- ✳ share NACA's publications with a friend
- ✳ share your thoughts on issues with NACA members and staff, as well as the many individuals and groups concerned about aging
- ✳ make things happen in your own community: donate time, effort or expertise.

Seniors' and aging-related organizations can

- ✳ invite NACA to address their group
- ✳ inform NACA of their concerns
- ✳ disseminate NACA's publications and promote knowledge about aging
- ✳ get back to NACA with their feedback, positive or negative.

Experts in gerontology, media specialists and business people can

- ✳ contribute to NACA's and Canada's pool of knowledge on aging and seniors; tell us what you think
- ✳ use NACA's data or provide new information
- ✳ think about/discuss issues of aging with your peers and other interested parties
- ✳ listen to seniors, solicit their input.

How can You reach NACA?

NACA wants to hear from you, to listen to your concerns and issues.

To give NACA your views, comments and suggestions or to obtain NACA's publications contact:

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